

# Memorandum

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**To:** Local Governmental Entities in Mississippi  
**From:** Craig P. Orgeron, Ph. D.  
**Date:** December 28, 2017 (*revised January 13, 2020*)  
**Re:** Instructions for Use for Electronic Bidding Services (RFP No. 4029)

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## Introduction to RFP No. 4029

ITS, on behalf of the Mississippi Department of Finance and Administration (DFA), issued RFP No. 4029 for the acquisition of Reverse Auction and Electronic Bidding Services in September 2017, with an award for Electronic Bidding Services published on December 18, 2017. Four of the awarded vendors have signed Master Agreements (i.e., contracted vendors) to be able to offer electronic bidding services through this award:

- Central Auction House dba Central Bidding
- EASiBuy, LLC
- eSolutionsGroup Limited
- Quest Construction Data Network, LLC

This multi-award, and the resulting contracts, meets or exceeds the requirements for procuring services by local governmental entities in Mississippi, when used as directed in this Instructions for Use Memorandum.

RFP No. 4029 was issued to provide local governmental entities in Mississippi with an option for implementation of the requirements in House Bills 1106 and 1109 from the 2017 Regular Session of the Mississippi Legislature.

## Background for Electronic Bidding Services

House Bill 1106 revised Mississippi Code Section 31-7-13(c)(v) and requires local governmental entities to provide a “secure electronic interactive system for the submittal of bids requiring competitive bidding that shall be an additional bidding option for those bidders who choose to submit their bids electronically.” The only exceptions to this requirement are for local governmental entities who are currently without available high-speed internet access and counties having a population of less than twenty thousand and municipalities having a population of less than ten thousand.

The requirement for the receipt of electronic bids was effective January 1, 2018, and is applicable to procurements governed by Mississippi Code Section 31-7-13.

“Local Governmental Entities” as used herein means governing authorities as defined by Mississippi Code Section 31-7-1(b).

Senate Bill 2674 from the 2018 Regular Session of the Mississippi Legislature was signed into law by the Governor on March 5, 2018, and allows bidders to be charged a fee not in excess of \$50.00 for submitting an electronic bid. Amendments to the Master Agreements with the awarded vendors from RFP No. 4029 have been signed to ensure compliance with the new law.

## Scope

The use of this award for Electronic Bidding Services is optional for local governmental entities in Mississippi. Local governmental entities using this award are not required to exclusively select a single contracted vendor (i.e., may use any or all contracted vendors for any period of time). Local governmental entities using this award will not be required to select a contracted vendor for any minimum period of time (i.e., may use any or all contracted vendors for any period of time).

The services provided through this award are limited to the provision of electronic bidding services. Contracted vendors cannot offer services for roles or work traditionally performed by public servants through this award, including but not limited to solicitation preparation, requirements/specifications development, specifications research/development, prequalification of bidding vendors/suppliers, and follow-on services (i.e., services performed after the electronic bid is awarded).

Contracted vendors must offer electronic bidding services for procurements valued at \$50,000.01 and above.

## Master Contract Effective Dates

Master Software as a Service Agreements are in place with four awarded vendors. The initial 2-year term of the Agreements expired on December 21, 2019. Amendments have been executed, extending the expiration date to December 21, 2020. Contracted vendors are not allowed to require signature of any other contract documents with local governmental entities choosing to use this award.

The State reserved the right for local governmental entities to require contracted vendors to sign addendums to the Master Agreement, when additional terms and conditions are required by federal partners or for other funding agents. Any additional terms and conditions required by the local governmental entity should be executed prior to beginning use of the service.

Copies of the signed Agreements are available through the MAGIC/Transparency website (URL: <https://www.msegov.com/dfa/transparency/contracts/contracts.aspx>), or by contacting the ITS Procurement Helpdesk, at (601) 432-8166 or [isshelp@its.ms.gov](mailto:isshelp@its.ms.gov).

## Who May Use

The use of this award for Electronic Bidding Services is optional for local governmental entities in Mississippi.

Mississippi state agencies cannot use this award. State agencies must use the State’s Enterprise Resource Planning System, MAGIC, administered through DFA, for electronic bidding.

### Dollar Limitations of Use

Fees to use the electronic bidding services are paid by the bidding vendors/suppliers choosing to use the service to submit their bids. There are no fees charged to the local governmental entities using the services.

### How to Use this Award

The contracted vendor pool for Electronic Bidding Services intentionally offers multiple options in order to best accommodate the unknowns regarding volume of use across all local governmental entities in Mississippi and the differences among contracted vendors in how the electronic bidding services are delivered. DFA encourages your feedback when using this award.

Local governmental entities are encouraged to critically review the fee schedule below when making the decision to engage one of the contracted vendors. DFA encourages local governmental entities to contact several of the vendors to discuss their services and the basis of their fee before selecting one for use.

### Vendor Contact and Fee Information

Contact and fee information for each of the contracted vendors is included below.

Contracted Vendor	Contact Name	Contact Information
Central Auction House dba Central Bidding	Ted Fleming	(225) 810-4814 <a href="mailto:ted@centralbidding.com">ted@centralbidding.com</a>
EASiBuy, LLC	Scott Patterson	(330) 931-4686 <a href="mailto:scott@eauctionservices.com">scott@eauctionservices.com</a>
eSolutionsGroup Limited	Alison Carden	(519) 884-3352 <a href="mailto:acarden@esolutionsgroup.ca">acarden@esolutionsgroup.ca</a>
Quest Construction Data Network, LLC	Mary Laxen	(952) 233-1632 (952) 657-7462 <a href="mailto:MLaxen@QuestCDN.com">MLaxen@QuestCDN.com</a>

Contracted Vendor	Fees to Bidding Vendors/Suppliers	
	Description	Fee
Central Auction House dba Central Bidding	Fee per download of bid documents (vs supplier/vendor downloading directly from local governmental entity)	\$49.99
	Six-month subscription to download an unlimited number of bid documents	\$499.99

Contracted Vendor	Fees to Bidding Vendors/Suppliers	
	Description	Fee
	(optional; offered as an additional pricing package for vendors)	
	Annual subscription to download an unlimited number of bid documents (optional; offered as an additional pricing package for vendors)	\$699.99
EASiBuy, LLC	Transaction fee for supplier when supplier submitted bid electronically (vs supplier having submitted via paper directly to local governmental entity)	\$50.00
eSolutionsGroup Limited	Fee per bid submitted electronically (vs vendor/supplier having submitted via paper directly to local governmental entity)	\$45.00
	Annual subscription to submit an unlimited number of bids electronically (optional; offered as an additional pricing package for vendors)	\$165.00
Quest Construction Data Network, LLC	Cost per electronic bid successfully submitted prior to time of bid closing	\$25.00

### What Goes in Your Purchase/Audit File for Use of Electronic Bidding Services

A copy of this Memorandum, along with notes made in the selection of a contracted vendor. Refer to the How to Use This Award section above.

### How to Use Electronic Bidding Services

How-To-Get-Started Guides for each of the contracted vendors are included in this Memorandum.

Local governmental entities using this award should download the results of each bid as soon as it is completed, such that the download is maintained as documentation of the procurement activities in accordance with the Mississippi Procurement Manual (published at this URL:

<https://www.dfa.ms.gov/dfa-offices/purchasing-travel-and-fleet-management/bureau-of-purchasing-and-contracting/procurement-manual/>) and any additional policies specific to the local entity.

Local governmental entities are reminded that bidding vendors/suppliers may not be required to submit bids electronically, pursuant to Mississippi Code Section 31-7-13(c)(v). We have made each contracted vendor aware of this condition. Should the winning low bid be a paper submission, no fee may be assessed against that bidding vendor/supplier. If both paper and electronic bids are received, a separate bid tabulation should be made in addition to the report generated by the Electronic Bidding Services provider to reflect all bids.

At no additional charge, each contracted vendor offers training to both local governmental entities and bidding vendors/suppliers. Additionally, each contracted vendor has the capability to “onboard” your current bidding vendors/suppliers who may wish to utilize these services when bidding. Please refer to the contracted vendors’ How-To-Get-Started Guides for additional information.

### **To Report Problems or Request Assistance**

To report problems or to request assistance in the use of this award, please contact:

- Ross Campbell, Director of DFA OPTFM, at (601) 359-2004 or [Ross.Campbell@dfa.ms.gov](mailto:Ross.Campbell@dfa.ms.gov)

Copies of this document are available on the Internet at: <http://www.dfa.ms.gov/dfa-offices/purchasing-travel-and-fleet-management/reverse-auction-and-electronic-bidding-services/>.

## How-to-Get-Started Guide: Central Auction House dba Central Bidding



# CENTRAL BIDDING

FROM CENTRAL AUCTION HOUSE

### HOW TO GET STARTED GUIDE FOR MISSISSIPPI VENDORS USING RFP #4209

Central Bidding works to assure all local governmental agencies are provided the tools for success when using our electronic bidding and reverse auction services. We believe this begins with a proper introduction to our services as well as in-depth, pertinent and onsite training when a local governmental agency is ready to begin using our services.

Central Bidding begins by setting up a web page for each local governmental agency within the Central Bidding Web Site. To set up the individual web page for each local governmental agency, the local governmental agency can call or email Finley Ward, Central Bidding Sales Representative for Mississippi (225) 333-9572, [finley@centralbidding.com](mailto:finley@centralbidding.com). The information Finley will require include the following:

1. Name of the local governmental agency (as you want it to appear on your web page)
2. Logo or likeness of the local governmental agency (as you want it to appear on your web page)
3. Contact name for person responsible for the local governmental agency (main contact for electronic bidding and reverse auction services).
4. Email address for the person responsible for the local governmental agency (main contact for electronic bidding and reverse auction services).
5. Phone number for the person responsible for the local governmental agency (main contact for electronic bidding and reverse auction services).
6. Physical address for the person responsible for the local governmental agency (main contact for electronic bidding and reverse auction services).

Once the web page for the local governmental agency is completed, Central Bidding is ready to set up training with the local governmental agency. This can be set up by calling or emailing Finley Ward, Central Bidding Sales Representative for Mississippi (225) 333-9572, [finley@centralbidding.com](mailto:finley@centralbidding.com). Central Bidding suggests onsite, in person training for each local governmental agency at the time when the local governmental agency is prepared to use the specific service. It is rare when an agency will be ready to upload an electronic bid and a reverse auction at the same time, so it is the suggestion of Central Bidding to schedule training sessions specific to each service at the time when the local governmental agency is ready to use that service. Training typically requires 30 to 45 minutes. Training requires access to the internet (Wi-Fi or an internet connected device).

Central Bidding will also set up credentials for as many users as requested by the local governmental agency. This is discussed at the time of the first training session. Users can be added and deleted at the direction of the local governmental agency.

Note regarding heading above: The RFP reference should be 4029 (rather than 4209).



## How-to-Get-Started Guide: EASiBuy, LLC

### ONBOARDING WITH EASIBUY

- 1) Submit your (ITS templated) order form via email to [support@eauctionservices.com](mailto:support@eauctionservices.com). Once submitted, an EASiBuy representative will contact you.
- 2) Establish your Users. You will be provided with a template document wherein you will specify two types of users: a) **Admin** – Have “edit” access to all events for your organization; and b) **Basic** – Can access any event where an “admin” user has configured them as a member.
- 3) EASiBuy will establish your users in the system and schedule a kick-off call to review the basics.
- 4) On this kick-off call, you will cover: a) Knowledge Base access; b) Help desk ticket system; c) Available support packages; and d) System basics
- 5) Once you have started using the system, EASiBuy remains available for many levels of support engagement. A representative is always happy to assist you.

### SOFTWARE OVERVIEW

This guide will introduce the concepts used throughout the software. We recommend reading this overview completely prior to diving in and using the software.

**Please note:** The terminology we use throughout this guide is appropriate for a reverse auction. The software is capable of running forward auctions as well. In these cases, the auction originator and bidder roles are reversed. Therefore, in a **Reverse Auction**, the Originator is known as the Buyer, while the Bidder is the Seller. For a **Forward Auction**, the Originator would be the Seller, with Bidders as Buyers.

### EVENTS

Events are the container for everything that happens during the sourcing process. They provide a mechanism for managing who will participate in the process, publishing documents and receiving responses, and collecting pricing in reverse auction format, as well as electronic price collection without reverse auction rules.



Here, we see a visual representation of all the components within an event. Let's take a closer look:

#### PARTICIPANTS

Participants are the people who will interact with the software throughout the sourcing event. What a participant sees is determined by what role they will play in the sourcing event.

**Bidders** review and respond to document packages and place bids.

**Editors** are Buyer staff who have the ability to make changes to the event.

**Observers** are Buyer staff who have read-only access to an event.

As you progress through the sourcing event, participants will move through "stages". These stages are used to control bidder access to document packages and the price submission interface.

## DOCUMENT PACKAGES

Document packages provide a means for buyers to publish information and files, and for bidders to respond by completing tasks and uploading files. An important aspect of document packages is their access level. Access to document packages can be limited to participants of a particular stage. This allows you to progressively release documents to groups of bidders as they pass through from stage to stage.

Bidders interact with document packages by completing tasks and uploading attachments. Observers are able to see bidder responses, and editors are able to "flag" tasks that are not compliant. These flagged items will be reflected on the bidder's interface, indicating to them that they need to address deficiencies.

## LOTS & LINE ITEMS

Line items are the things you intend to purchase, which are organized into lots. You create lots and line items either through the web interface, or by uploading them using an auction layout spreadsheet.

When bidders submit pricing, they log in to the bidding interface, and select a lot. From there, they can submit prices on individual line items, or they can upload a spreadsheet with all their bids at once. The bids placed are validated against the auction rules, and bidders receive feedback in real time.

## REVERSE AUCTIONS & ELECTRONIC BIDDING EVENTS

During the eProcurement, buyers use the observer interface to monitor the bid. This interface provides a means to monitor and control a procurement. From this screen, buyers are able to pause the event, see which bidders are logged in, and monitor the time remaining.

**Bidder Overview** - Sums all baseline and bid information for each bidder, displaying overall rank, bid, and savings information.

**Line Item Overview** - Shows the 1st place bid for each line item, with bid and savings information.

**Line Item Detail** - Details information for a specific line item, including each bidder, bid amount, and savings information.

Together, these views provide a comprehensive, live-updated view into auction performance.

## REPORTING

Reports provide information about auction activity and bidding results. Once the bid has closed, buyers can run reports in several formats. Each format provides a different level of detail, with some reports focused on statistical auction performance, and others focused on providing a comparison of pricing submitted by suppliers: a) **Event** – Overview providing auction activity information; b) **Lot** – Ranked bid tabs with audit log of all bids placed in an event; c) **Line Item** – Ranked bid tabulations and an audit log for a specific line item; and d) **Bidder** – Comprehensive, side-by-side report of all bidders and all lines.

## RECAP / Sample Sourcing Event Workflow





## How-to-Get-Started Guide: eSolutionsGroup Limited

### APPENDIX A – HOW TO USE THIS CONTRACT

Local Government Entities can utilize the 4029 Contract to implement an Electronic Bidding Solution, including all professional services.

#### How to Use this Contract

1. Complete the online request form: <https://esolutions.formbuilder.ca/State-Contract>
2. An invitation to attend a 20 minute webinar specifically for the Mississippi entities and how to participate, proposed solution, pricing options and implementation plan and services will be reviewed.
3. Upon signed agreement, eSolutions will start the project with the local government within two weeks.

Note regarding item 3 above: The State has already signed a Master Software As A Service Agreement; therefore, each local governmental entity using the electronic bidding services of eSolutionsGroup does not need to sign an additional agreement.



## Getting started with QuestCDN's VirtuBid service

Starting with QuestCDN is very simple to accomplish choosing one of the following 3 options:

1. Using QuestCDN's web contact form:
  - a. Go to [www.QuestCDN.com](http://www.QuestCDN.com)
  - b. Click on "Contact" option
  - c. Fill out the Contact Information part of the form
  - d. Select "Other"
  - e. In the Message section request Client Engagement/Support contact you to assist in getting started using VirtuBid in Mississippi.
2. Using your email
  - a. Simply send an email to [info@questcdn.com](mailto:info@questcdn.com) including the following information
    - i. Your contact information – Name, email address, phone number
    - ii. Request Client Engagement/Support contact you regarding getting started using VirtuBid in Mississippi.
3. Call QuestCDN
  - a. Contact Quest Client Engagement and Support at 952-233-1632 and speak to one of our customer service folks. Request assistance in getting started using VirtuBid in Mississippi.

Quest Client Engagement and Support will guide you through the entire process. We have assisted 100's of cities, counties and other government agencies in "Getting Started". We know from experience that each client is unique, and we will customize our assistance based on your needs.